DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 379 974 HE 028 074

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TITLE Your Internship Is As Good As You Make It: A Practical Guide to Student Internships.
INSTITUTION National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering, Inc., Notre Dame, IN.
SPONS AGENCY Union Carbide Corp., Danbury, CT.
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 24p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Students; Definitions; Eligibility; *Guidelines; Higher Education; *Internship Programs; Interviews; Professional Development; Program Development; Program Implementation; Reports; *Student Development; *Student Experience; *Student Responsibility; Student Role

ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to provide college students with an overview of the internship experience, as well as tips for a successful internship. Part 1 discusses the transition from student to professional and the role that an internship can play in professional and career development. It defines the nature and types of internships available, identifies resources for locating internships, reviews things to consider when applying for internships, and presents guidelines for a successful internship experience. Part 2 addresses the responsibilities of the internship provider, focusing on the role of the intern supervisor, the benefits of internship to students and organizations, and intern responsibilities. Part 3 discusses the end of the internship and the return to school, focusing on the final project report to be prepared by the intern, the debriefing or exit interview conducted by the organization, hints for academic success, and possible career opportunities resulting from internships. (Contains 14 references.) (MDM)

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Your Internship Is As Good As You Make It

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO STUDENT INTERNSHIPS

by Alyssia J. Parris and
Howard G. Adams, Ph.D.

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Publications developed in the GEM Center draw on the experiences and skills of a number of staff associates. In this context, we would like to thank Robert I. Lewis, II for his editorial review and comments, Susan Larsen for design and layout, and Amy Schmidt, Sylvia Wilson and B. J. Valdez. A special thanks goes to Donald E. Gatewood for securing the publication grant through Union Carbide Corporation.

Produced at the National Center for Graduate Education for Minorities.

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PREFACE

In today's competitive job market, outstanding academic achievement is no longer sufficient to guarantee full-time employment for new college graduates. The inescapable "catch-22" for many job seekers today can be said in two words: "No Experience!" The best way to get around this obstacle is to get experience while still a student. An internship might be just what the employer is looking for!

This guide, *Your Internship Is As Good As You Make It*, is designed to provide students with an overview of the concept of an internship in the context of planning one's career. It grew out of the experiences of the GEM Program, an effort that has placed more than 2,000 interns in industrial and governmental laboratories across America since 1976. This publication is designed to identify the nature of interning from the perspective of the student intern and the industrial/governmental sponsors. In addition, this guide provides a perspective on how to make the internship experience the catalyst to a career/networking relationship.

Specific areas addressed in Part I are:

- **the transition from student to professional,**
- **definition of an internship,**
- **types of internships,**
- **resources for locating internships,**
- **things to consider when applying for an internship, and**
- **making the most of the internship experience.**

Part II addresses

- **"good practices" for supervising an intern,**
- **the student 's benefits,**
- **benefits that accrue to organizations, and**
- **intern responsibilities.**

Part III addresses

- **the final project report,**
- **debriefing – Exit interview,**
- **preparations to return to school, and**
- **staying in touch.**

This guide is part of a series of publications produced by the GEM Center that focus on "best practice" strategies for enhancing student educational and vocational opportunities. Other publications in the series are:
Making the Grade in Graduate School: Survival Strategy 101;
Mentoring: An Essential Factor in the Doctoral Process for Minority Students;
Successfully Negotiating the Graduate School Process: A Guide for Minority Students;
Techniques for Effective Undergraduate Mentoring: A Faculty/Student Guide,; and
Focusing on the Campus Milieu: A Guide for Enhancing the Graduate School Climate.

PART 1

INTERNSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

An internship is more than a job or a way to earn money. Indeed, an internship is an educational opportunity where one can gain career-related experiences. In most instances, it also provides an opportunity to earn a salary while learning. It is a career development option that allows students to test the world of work. By experiencing first hand the conditions and nuances of the workplace, interns acquire a realistic perspective of employer expectations and, thus gain knowledge about the habits, skills and attitudes needed, valued, and rewarded. For the employer, the internship placement provides an opportunity to observe some highly qualified and flexible personnel. This mutually beneficial relationship makes an internship program rewarding for both employers and students.

The Transition from Student to Professional

The primary purpose of an internship is to gain practical experience and network with experienced professionals in the work place. Recognizing that there is a difference between being a student and being a professional, individuals can prepare themselves for the transition to careering by taking advantage of an internship. The transition from student to professional is captivated and addressed throughout the internship experience.

Getting an internship position is based primarily on a student's grades and recommendations. Keep in mind that most internships are awarded to students with the intention of making the student a potential employee. Thus, the student's performance during the internship is what inspires a supervisor to recommend the intern for a permanent position with the organization.

Today, most internship programs look upon their interns as entry-level employees. The intern's assignments and projects are intended to enhance the intern's development. Therefore, to enhance and develop your skills, you have to take initiative and make the most of the internship experience.

The most important thing you can do as a student is to assume responsibility for your future. Be friendly, eager to learn and conscientious. Make it a point to learn as much as possible about every position. Convey to your co-workers and supervisor that you are enthusiastic about what you are doing and a team player who is willing to pitch in. Most importantly, be self-assured, confident and willing to take risks.

This guide will help you facilitate the transition from being a student to being a professional.

The Internship

An internship is meant to expose students to the rigors of a daily work routine under the supervision of a seasoned professional. It should be a broad, maturing experience that serves as a transitional "cushion" from college to the workplace, while allowing the individual to develop the skills necessary to excel as a professional.

Some key learning experiences offered through an internship are:

the testing of one's skills and trying out ideas in a non-permanent job situation;

the opportunity to work alongside experienced professionals;

the opportunity to observe professional relationships, work ethics, professional decorum and attire in the workplace;

the opportunity to build networks for future contacts concerning career moves, training options, and graduate school; and

the chance to relocate and live in a new and different environment.

Beyond these experiences, Figure 1 provides additional benefits that one gains from an internship experience.

Figure 1
Why Students Seek Internships

To gain practical experience in a field of interest.

To develop skills needed to enter a chosen field.

To reinforce career objectives.

To earn money.

To bridge the gap between collegiate life and full time employment.

These are all critical experiences that will enhance the personal, professional and educational development of an individual going through the transition from a student to a professional. Because a well-planned and well-implemented internship can offer all of these experiences and more, it is

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paramount that undergraduate as well as graduate students take advantage of the internship experience.

The benefits derived from an internship center around overcoming the obstacle of having educational theory and not the practical experience to augment and reinforce the theoretical knowledge. The internship provides the opportunity to balance the practical and theoretical knowledge that is often required in today's competitive working environment. Thus, students can enhance their professional credentials through a well developed internship experience.

Types of Internships

Internships are categorized under various types and, while there are no hard and fast arrangements, the format outlined here generally covers most internship arrangements available to students.

Summer Internship – **students are employed on a full-time basis during the summer between the end of the spring term and the beginning of the fall term.**

Full-time Internship – **students are employed at a forty hour work week for an extended period of several weeks.**

Part-time Internship – **students are employed less than at a forty hour work week during the academic year in conjunction with their academic classes for one or more quarters or semesters.**

Volunteer Internship – **students work without compensation for a non-profit or public service organization.**

Created Internship – **a student makes a proposal to a company or organization to develop a unique position for the expressed purpose of providing an employment related educational opportunity. Compensation can be realized or it may be done on a volunteer basis.**

Internships can be flexible to accommodate the mutual needs of both the student and the employer. Regardless of the type, students should seek an internship arrangement that best suits their needs and provides the learning experience to build and enhance educational and professional skills.

Resources for Locating Internships

Career/life goal planning begins with an understanding of one's aspirations and goals. The next step involves utilizing the resources that surround you on a daily basis, e.g.,

- **Know who the players are on your campus, in your community, at your part-time job, etc.**
- **Establish a relationship with them and make them aware of your goals.**
- **Make sure that your relationship with them is such that if you need a call or reference made on your behalf, it can be done favorably.**

What you know in terms of academics is important, but who you know can make the difference in obtaining an internship, a job or being nominated to an executive body or board. Figure 2 provides a list of resources that are available to most college students who are seeking internships.

These offices and the individuals who run them are excellent contacts. Note, *every office, professor, peer or organization on your campus, in the community or at your place of work* ***is a resource.*** If you look upon every interaction you make on a daily basis as a prime opportunity to network, you will begin to expand your resource base and build new contacts. By taking advantage of these and other resources, you should be able to identify a number of potential internships, that fit your educational/career goals and objectives.

FIGURE 2
UTILIZE ALL POSSIBLE RESOURCES

Library
Professors
Career Placement Office
Upperclassmen
Notices in professional publications
Corporations
Student Affairs/Activities Office
Bulletins
Minority/Women Affairs Office
Student Organizations
Graduate Studies Office
Greek Organizations
Alumni Sponsored Internships
Faculty
Internship Administrators
Government Agencies

APPLYING FOR AN INTERNSHIP

It is very likely that most students will be applying for more than one internship opportunity— in fact, it is recommended. Each internship may have different requirements and deadlines. Because this may be the first contact a company or organization has with the student, it is very important to make a good first impression. Therefore, pay close attention to the requirements of each application. According to some companies in the GEM network of employer members, the number one reason for students not receiving internships is "failure to follow directions and applying late." Specifically, follow the directions to the letter and make sure that the application arrives before the deadline. Once you identify the internships you desire, follow these important steps in applying to ensure that you give yourself every opportunity to be considered.

Step 1
- Read requirements and follow directions carefully.
- Establish a "checklist" of requested information.
- Make note of deadlines.

Step 2
- Request official transcript(s).
- Make appointments with professors, advisors, supervisors, etc. to request letters of recommendation.
- Begin writing letter of interest, if required.

Note: Since the application process requires time, the earlier you begin working on it, the better your chances are of completing a "smart" application before the deadline (Adams, 1985).

Step 3 The third and final step of the internship application process depends entirely on you. Therefore, to ensure that you have a "smart" application requires that:

- All materials are typed neatly with no spelling or grammatical errors.
- Check to make sure you have followed all the directions.
- Make copies of all materials and keep them in a file.
- Send the application and all required materials in a single package three to four weeks before the application deadline.
- Follow up within a week to confirm your application was received and that everything is complete.

No matter which type of internship you apply to, you should treat it as if you are applying for a full-time job. There will be many qualified students just like you who are applying for the same internship; thus, your only goal is to distinguish your application from all others.

PRIMARY CRITERIA OF CONSIDERATION

Organizations utilize a number of factors in the overall selection of interns. It is important for the intern to be aware of these factors.

Among the criteria most often used are:

Grades
Letters of recommendation
Work experience
Extracurricular activities

It is no secret that companies and organizations are looking for good students. Usually these students are identified through their grades. Good grades are normally interpreted as excellent academic preparation. The students that excel academically are the ones most favorably looked upon to be offered an internship. Succeeding should be the expected outcome of the educational experience. Therefore, the "effort" you allocate to your studies will be the deciding factor in achieving good grades. If you believe, you will succeed! Good academic credentials are built through a strategic plan of action. To accomplish this each student should follow the steps outlined in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3
A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR BUILDING GOOD ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS

- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Believe in yourself.
- Stay away from activities that distract.
- Seek and utilize assistance as needed.
- Seek advice, listen and learn from others.
- Read, read, read, everything all the time.
- Carefully balance time and resources.
- Chart and focus on milestones.
- Act like you belong; function with a purpose.
- Don't isolate yourself.
- Expect and plan for the unexpected.
- Work through down periods.

Excerpted from "Essentials for Tapping One's Full Potential as a Doctoral Student", Making the Grade in Graduate School: Survival Strategy 101, *Howard G. Adams, Ph.D.;* © *1992*

Also very important are letters of recommendation. The reason being, they provide support for your academic achievements and character. Determining whom to ask for a letter of recommendation should be based on the type of relationship you have established with that person (as noted in **Locating Resources**). Always make certain to secure recommendations that will give a favorable impression of you and add to your credentials. Therefore, request recommendations from persons familiar with your work habits, academic ability, achievements and character. An advisor or professor from your university or a supervisor from your job would be a wise choice.

In making the request, provide

- **a brief synopsis of your goals and objectives,**
- **why the internship position is important to you, and**
- **an unofficial transcript and resume.**

By providing this information, you make the recommender's job easier and he or she will be more likely to agree to provide a letter of recommendation. Furthermore, with this information, a recommendation can be written that is useful in your appeal for consideration.

Some internship applications require a letter of interest. This exposition is a written version of you. Because first impressions count, it is important to make sure the exposition is brief, to the point, factual, neat, and professional in appearance. Always allow your professors or peers to review it for grammatical and spelling errors. The exposition is a good opportunity to highlight prior working experiences and extracurricular activities that imply you are a good match for the internship. Because most companies place great value on an intern's experience, past work experiences and involvement in extracurricular activities convey to the employer that the applicant is a well-rounded individual and has the leadership characteristics that are valued in a potential intern.

Steps to Interviewing

Some internships require an interview. Approach this as though it were an interview for permanent employment. Do your homework on the company. To be considered a viable candidate, it is important to come to the interview prepared with specific information and knowledge about the company offering the internship. Specifically

- **know their product line,**
- **find out about their competitors, and**
- **know why they are successful.**

An excellent way to prepare for an interview is to practice. This can be done by going through a mock interview, either by yourself or with a friend. While conducting a mock interview concentrate on

- **practicing power moves in the mirror,**
- **being conscious of body language,**
- **sitting up straight,**
- **using gestures,**
- **having an expressive face, and**
- **always having a warm smile.**

A mock interview typically involves role playing. Ask a friend to ask you questions that might be used during the interview. Answer the questions as though you were actually interviewing with a company or organization. Whether you practice in front of a mirror or with a friend, keep practicing until you are relaxed, comfortable, and confident with your information and yourself.

A listing of questions that are most often asked by employers and interviewees during job interviews are provided in Figures 4 and 5 on the next page. Since you should treat an internship interview as though it were an interview for full-time employment, knowing and practicing the questions should prepare you for any interview.

Dressing for the Interview

No matter what kind of job, dressing professionally for an interview is a must. Proper dress conveys the message that you are serious about this interview and that you understand professional decorum. Be simple and conservative. For men, wear a suit and or blazer, slacks and a tie. Women should wear a suit or a skirt and blouse. The colors should be black, blue, grey or beige. For less formal interviews dress appropriately for the organization and be sure to be neat.

Making the Most of the Internship

Things to Consider Before the Internship Begins

Congratulations on your internship offer! Now that it is official you need to make concrete plans for your internship experience. It is an opportunity to explore your field, meet new people, possibly live in a new and different environment, discover your strengths and weaknesses and learn what is expected of you in the professional arena. Along with being responsible for projects and meeting deadlines, you will develop techniques to get along with various types of people. Since relocation may be a requirement, you will have to budget your earnings towards housing, transportation, food and other miscellaneous items. More importantly, being on your own for the first time involves looking to yourself in making monetary decisions. And even if you stay at home, budgeting your money and your time around your family and social activities is also a big responsibility. The experience you gain from managing your money and time will be useful throughout your career. Above all, the internship is the place to make mistakes and learn from them.

Tips to Get Started

- **Ask employer for relevant literature to read in advance. Keep up to date on the company's activities. For example, read the company's newsletter, monthly reports, business magazines and newspapers.**

FIGURE 4
TWENTY QUESTIONS ASKED BY INTERVIEWERS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your career goals?
3. Where do you expect to be in your career within five years? Ten years?
4. What are your educational goals?
5. What do you know about the position I'm interviewing you for?
6. What skills, experience and training do you have that make you qualified for the job?
7. What other positions have you had that qualify you for this position?
8. Have you any supervisory or administrative experience? Please tell me about it.
9. Can you meet deadlines? If so, give me an example.
10. If the people who work with you were to evaluate you, what would they say?
11. What motivates you?
12. How do you best motivate others?
13. What professional associations do you belong to?
14. What volunteer work do you do or have you done in the past?
15. What awards have you received?
16. Have you ever received any fellowships? When? Why? What did you do?
17. Have you written any articles for a professional journal, magazine or newspaper? When? What were they about?
18. What do you do in your spare time?
19. Are you willing to travel for this position?
20. If your career demanded it, would you be willing to relocate for advancement?

FIGURE 5
TWENTY QUESTIONS POSED TO INTERVIEWERS

1. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
2. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
3. Please describe the duties of the job for me.
4. What kinds of assignments might I expect?
5. How much authority will I have over decisions?
6. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
7. Is there a lot of team/project work?
8. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
9. How often are performance reviews given?
10. What products (or services) are in the development stage now?
11. Do you have plans for expansion?
12. What are your growth projections for next year?
13. What do you (the interviewer) like best about your job/company?
14. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
15. Does your company provide any financial assistance for further education?
16. What characteristics do the achievers in this company share?
17. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
18. Do you have a standard benefits package or can I choose from a variety of options?
19. What is your vacation policy?
20. What is the salary range for this position?

- **Don't wait until you start your internship to develop new skills. If you are required to learn new software, try and get a head start.**
- **Plan and select your wardrobe according to the expected dress code of the company.**
- **Get mentally and physically prepared to work. Plan how you will organize outside activities and commitments.**
- **Start a journal to keep note of your daily experiences.**

The following are some questions interns should consider asking if not routinely informed by the company. Answers to these questions can make the transition to the internship go smoothly.

- **What is my job description?**
- **What is the performance criteria?**
- **What is the company's expectations?**
- **Who is the supervisor?**
- **Where will I live (if internship requires relocation)? What about housing, is this provided?**
- **What is the cost of housing?**
- **Can quarters be shared with other interns?**
- **Are there other interns from my area who will be interning as well?**
- **Are travel expenses covered?**

The one thing an intern would not want is to get to the new surrounding and feel out of place. Therefore, if you are responsible for finding your living quarters, here are some suggestions that can help you become acclimated to your new surroundings.

- **If possible, make a "get to know the place" trip prior to the move.**
- **Try to locate housing that is in reasonable proximity to the worksite.**
- **Where possible, secure housing close to convenient outlets such as the grocery store, cleaners, banks, shopping area, etc.**
- **To get a feel for the area, make the final move one week prior to reporting to work.**
- **Visit the work site prior to the first day to get acquainted and know how to get there from your residence.**
- **Network prior to your move to make contact with friends or family.**

Knowing the Do's and Don'ts

In most courses the professor informs students on the first day of the ground rules so that students know what is expected of them. There is a similar format when a student is interning with a company or organization. The responsibility of how the student performs in their duties and the manner in which they carry themselves is determined by these rules. There may be supervisors who will pull a student to the side and have a heart to heart talk about the "do's" and "don'ts;" however, some will not! Consequently, you will need to be prepared to have a watchful eye and learn the "ropes" of company policy. Figure 6 lists some do's and don'ts that should be taken very seriously.

Responsibilities of the Intern

Your primary goal as an intern is to learn from the internship. Approach the internship experience as a series of challenges to test your skills and capabilities, and where you will learn to grow as an individual. This requires setting high goals for yourself and following through with a plan of action for accomplishing those goals. The stress and anxiety you may experience during the internship should not be viewed as a reason for failure, but as a stimulus to achieve. The benefits you reap from the internship experience are only what you make it. If you set high goals for yourself, others will notice and may provide expanded opportunities for you.

FIGURE 6
DO'S AND DON'TS

Do...	*Don't...*
ask questions,	get too familiar too fast,
keep your supervisor informed,	ignore your supervisor,
dress to suit your job,	gossip about your supervisor,
get along with your co-workers,	just know your job,
take your assignment seriously,	fight the system,
be flexible with your lunchtime,	push to personalize your area,
realize your supervisor is a resource, and	expect too much of others, and
remain professional at all times.	abuse privileges.

It is expected that supervisors will nurture their interns, however, the supervisor will look highly upon an intern that takes initiative, is a team player, pays attention to details, sets priorities and has respect for his colleagues and supervisor. This is the model an intern should follow. With a positive attitude, dedication and determination, you will see that doing good things and having the right kinds of people and contacts around you will open doors for you. This knowledge and information will allow you to open doors for others.

INTERN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Be punctual.**
- **Complete work assignments.**
- **Communicate progress of work activities.**
- **Follow-up.**
- **Study and learn.**
- **Participate in activities.**
- **Work with mentor.**
- **Dress appropriately.**
- **Follow instructions and directions.**
- **Be open to advice and critique of work.**
- **Be productive.**

JUDGMENT

- **Be a self-starter.**
- **Be a team-player.**
- **Learn how to listen and follow instructions.**
- **Know when to ask questions.**
- **Set priorities.**
- **Know your work place.**
- **Take on challenges.**
- **Stay free of office cliques.**

During your internship experience you will learn valuable information about your area of expertise and will have the opportunity to meet individuals who will have direct influence on your future. By taking charge of your internship experience – the information gathered, the contacts made and the skills acquired – will prove useful in your immediate and future career plans. An internship experience will position you far along the path of personal development, as well as enhance your experience.

TIPS ON MAXIMIZING YOUR INTERNSHIP

As mentioned earlier, there is a transition that must be made from being a student to being a professional. An intern is considered a professional throughout the duration of the internship. Therefore, in order to take advantage of the internship, the intern must take the initiative and do the things that will enhance the skills for being a professional.

Being able to communicate your thoughts effectively is very important. Many students find it difficult to express themselves in front of an audience or convey their thoughts in writing. Listed below are some tips useful in developing effective communications skills.

- **Maintain a daily or weekly journal.**
- **Write short papers to demonstrate the understanding of basic concepts or principals you are working on.**
- **Present your assignments to your peers and supervisors and request feedback.**
- **Read and learn from others writing in your field of interest.**

Practicing your writing and oral skills will help you to effectively communicate your points of view.

Other ways of making effective use of your time during an internship is to take full advantage of the company's library. It is a good time to do research for a thesis project or a major paper you may have to write. It also would not hurt to get around and ask other employees about their positions and the assignments they are working on. During part of your lunch period would be a good time to tour the company to gain insight into other divisions and their functions. By using your time efficiently you will get a better understanding of the company, the people you are working with, and the options available to you.

Listed below are some more tips that will allow you to take full advantage of the internship experience and make the transition from student to full-time professional much easier.

Take initiative. Go the "extra mile." Take on assignments that require extra work. Volunteer to take on projects that others avoid. If you are asked to perform what might be regarded as mundane work, do it well. Become a reliable and dependable fixture in your department. If there are assignments to be completed over the weekend, volunteer to come in and help. Remember, you are not doing this because it is expected or required of you, but because these are normal rights of passage for anyone who aspires.

Have an open mind to what you are about to experience. Have a positive attitude about the people you will meet and get to know them. Be receptive, energetic, enthusiastic and ready for information that might be shared with you.

Come to work prepared to listen and learn. You are in an information gathering mode and cannot afford to discard information or individuals that you judge to be of no importance or not directly related to your career objectives. Hear the factual information, interpret it and be prepared to respond and learn from each encounter.

The work day. Get to your workstation early. If starting time is 8:30 a.m., try to be at your desk at 8:00 a.m. If closing is at 5:00 p.m., stay at your desk until 5:30 p.m.

Network and build contacts. First and foremost you should look upon others in the workplace as valuable colleagues, and not competitors. Share information, work together with a commitment to do so again in future activities. Get to know other employees in the company and especially those in human resources, for they can keep you informed about job openings as well as be a good job reference for you.

Wear appropriate clothing. Your mode of dress can make a career goal statement as well as a social statement; therefore, dress the part of a professional, for that is why you are doing your internship. Don't dress down to others, dress up to what you are striving for! Women should keep it simple and conservative. Over time you will obtain the style that expresses you. For men, shirts and ties are generally the order of the day. Set yourself apart. Always dress the part of the company, even if there are dress down days.

Get sufficient rest. It makes sense that you get your rest every evening. Resist temptation to stay out late and hang out. Fatigue catches up to you; don't let fatigue be all that you walk away with from this experience.

Open your eyes and ears and have the intelligence, energy and inclination to use it.

POINTERS ON PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

Because of the nature of most internships – visibility, people, daily contacts, etc. – professionalism is a must. It demonstrates self discipline, responsibility and leadership. More importantly, since you will be building your personal reputation, you must carry yourself in a professional and dignified manner.

Professional Conduct. A sage old expression holds that "The first impression is always the most lasting impression"; therefore, conduct yourself accordingly. In maintaining a professional attitude, you gain respect and trust, which will allow you to develop positive relations with others. Your frame of mind should be professional, and your actions reveal this mind set. Such a posture will distinguish you and position you for high recognition within your company's corporate culture.

Over Socializing. Becoming "too friendly" in a work environment can create a bad perception for you among others. Keep your conversation short, if not discussing business matters. Schedule time after work to socialize extensively. Also when socializing, don't become overly familiar. Continue to address your managers or customers on a last name basis, unless requested to do otherwise. In other settings address the individual as expected.

Telephone Disposition. "A word to the wise," do not make or receive personal or social phone calls. Limit your work number to your parents or guardians. Unless there is an emergency or illness, personal and social phone calls should be made on your time.

Consider the time restraints of other professionals and respect the positions they hold by preparing conversation notes prior to calling your party. Do not continuously call a customer or a party the same day when you have been informed they will return your call the following day. Do not interrupt a call to speak with someone in your office for a long period of time.

Corporate Rules and Hierarchy. Remember to say "thanks." Respect your colleagues and listen to their ideas. Understand that rules and regulations are in place to provide a safe, wholesome and productive environment. Respect these by

- **smoking only in designated areas,**
- **practicing safety habits,**
- **following chains of command,**
- **respecting authority, and**
- **respecting a company's confidentiality, especially if you are privy to proprietary information.**

Networking revisited. As stated earlier you never know who or what situation will bear fruit and do some good, so it is imperative that you be open to all opportunities. Many times you may be asked to join your co-workers or supervisors after work for a meal or other social functions. Do so!

Cardinal rules never to be broken. Do not look at these "social outings" as opportunities to "let your hair down." You might end up getting "scalped" by saying the wrong thing to the wrong person. Be very careful about consuming alcohol at company functions. "Be cool and order a Perrier with lime!" Remember, you are the future, prepare for your future roles today!

PART II

ORGANIZATION'S RESPONSIBILITY TO INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

STEPS TO GOOD SUPERVISION

The success of any internship program is dependent upon the endorsement and support of top management. It is crucial that top management be actively supportive of an internship program to 1) ensure participation from their senior employees; 2) acknowledge the intern's credibility and 3) make sure the interns are not being relegated to "back-burner" projects.

The role of the supervisor in the life of an intern is not unlike that of a mentor to a protégé. The mentor is a loyal advisor entrusted with the care and education of the protégé. The mentor nurtures the protégé and helps to develop their abilities, work habits and interpersonal skills. Thus, the role of the supervisor should be viewed as that of a mentor. Specifically, it should be the development of the intern through the passing on of skills from experience and providing a non-threatening environment that allows the intern to look to the supervisor for advice as a sounding board. Through the nurturing of the supervisor, the intern is provided with the opportunity to:

- **learn by experience;**
- **improve self-confidence;**
- **have a role model;**
- **get career advice;**
- **gain a sense of value to the company;**
- **learn the ropes of the company (culture, values, presentation skills, where power lies, etc.)**
- **gain insight into achieving a higher profile;**
- **experience the day-to-day management process;**
- **learn how the business works; and**
- **understand why things are done a certain way.**

To ensure a well-prepared internship program, an orientation session for the individuals serving as supervisors should be set up to provide a realistic job preview. Given that the supervisor's relationship is very crucial in the development of the intern, the orientation should provide the goals of the internship, its resources and clarify the role and responsibility of the supervisors. Figure 7 outlines some of the supervisor's responsibilities.

FIGURE 7
SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Take a strong interest and concern in developing the intern;
- have a broad base understanding of the industry and organization;
- have relevant areas of expertise;
- acquaint the intern with the work site, company expectations, and areas of responsibility;
- be communicative to the intern;
- be easily accessible to the intern;
- offer mutual respect;
- teach the intern;
- nurture the intern; and
- encourage the intern.

The supervisor's role as a mentor provides mutual benefits for the supervisor as well as the intern. Besides successful completion of assignments for the company, the supervisor gains a sense of satisfaction as the intern learns and develops. Additionally, the supervisor gains a feeling of pride from watching the intern mature as a confident, able worker. Yet, the most rewarding part is the friendship that evolves as well as the intern's feelings of self-worth and self-confidence.

STUDENT AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF COMPANY

The internship experience enables the student to open new doors while being exposed to expanded career options, i.e., graduate school or a job. It helps the intern to apply what is learned in the classroom while becoming a partner in meeting the needs of the company. In addition, it enables the intern to develop the specific skills of an effective worker, as well as how to become a responsible professional in society.

Employers benefit from hosting an intern through:

accomplishing special projects in research,

gathering of information and data,

marketing and production,

reduced recruitment costs through intern hiring, and

increased employee retention.

Most importantly, the intern gets practical experience and learns to work. Figure 8 outlines additional benefits that accrue to both the intern and the employer from an effective intern/employer relationship.

FIGURE 8
INTERN AND EMPLOYER BENEFITS

Intern

- Gains meaningful experience which enhances educational development and further refines career and professional alternatives;
- completes a variety of worthy projects that augment classroom learnings;
- conveys to superiors your ability to do exceptional work;
- makes new contacts for networking in the future;
- enhances ability to obtain future employment; and
- obtains experience and knowledge.

Employer

- Gets assignments completed which otherwise might not have been done;
- has available students who might return for expanded assignments;
- has opportunity to develop the intern for possible future employment; and
- has intern as an ambassador to share experience with other students.

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PART III

ENDING THE INTERNSHIP AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL

THE FINAL PROJECT REPORT

Most companies require a final project report at the end of the internship. However, even if a project report is not required, it is in the intern's best interest to provide the supervisor with a synopsis of the work assigned, completed, outcomes, and the experiences gained. By doing this, the supervisor, as well as other professionals, will have tangible evidence of the intern's capabilities and experiences which include:

- **enthusiasm,**
- **thought processes,**
- **eye for detail,**
- **capabilities and potential, and**
- **communication skills.**

A final project report summarizes all the work assignments the intern was given during the internship. This report provides a detailed description of the research done, the contributions it made to the organization, followup questions and the potential for ongoing research. The potential for ongoing research is very important, because the intern has left a "paper trail" for the next person to pick up. It looks very positive on behalf of the intern and leaves a permanent impression of the intern's capabilities.

Technically, the final project report follows a scientific reporting method as shown in Figure 9. Preparation for the final project report requires spending a period of time gathering the information required. Waiting towards the end of the internship to begin working on the report will more than likely causes stress or anxiety due to added pressure. To avoid the likelihood of stress due to time constraints, below are some suggestions to use in making advance preparations for the final project report.

FIGURE 9
SCIENTIFIC REPORTING METHOD

An introductory statement, including the general nature of the work assignment or the project if it is a special project,

the objective — a concise statement of what the project sought to accomplish,

a description of project activities with action steps for carrying out the project, and

concluding remarks which describe outcomes, impact of the work experience , and its contributions to the employer.

- **Keep a daily or weekly journal on all assignments.**
- **Do appropriate research, this may include networking with full-time employees and supervisor for additional information and insight.**
- **Revisit steps to interviewing on page 6 for pointers for formatting a presentation, if one is required.**
- **Make sure the report is concise and understandable.**

The benefit the intern gains by doing a final project report can enhance the chances for future opportunities with the company. These opportunities can include:

challenging future work assignments,

assisting and conducting further research,

increasing your overall knowledge of the company, and

becoming a future employee.

Overall, the final project report can lead to future opportunities that make the intern increasingly indispensable to the organization. Take advantage of the opportunity and give it your best!

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DEBRIEFING – EXIT INTERVIEW

By definition, an exit interview is the giving and receiving of information to benefit the employer and employee. It is also an opportunity for the employer to probe the employee for information for later analysis. Usually, an exit interview takes place when an employee is resigning from their position, has been laid-off or dismissed by the company.

In the case of the intern, especially the intern that hopes to return to the company for future internships, the exit-interview is very important and takes on a different role. The difference is, the intern should view the exit interview as an opportunity to assess how the supervisor views their performance and the possibility for future employment. To facilitate this, the intern should prepare a checklist to make sure there are no loose ends and to explore future opportunities.

Things to be included in the check list.

Final Project Report

- **Results from the research conducted.**
- **Information that may still be missing.**
- **Opinion/advice for project completion, where applicable.**

Miscellaneous

- **Complete all assignments.**
- **Return all equipment.**
- **Settle all outstanding accounts.**
- **Travel /moving arrangements needed.**
- **Correct school/home address for future purposes.**

Finally, the intern should use this time to express concerns about the internship experience to the supervisor.

Overall Climate of the Internship Experience

- **Interaction with other employees.**
- **Credibility acknowledged.**
- **Working conditions.**
- **Professionalism.**

Evaluation of Job Assignment

- **Orientation to your assignment.**
- **Meaningfulness of assigned task.**
- **Adequacy of guidance by the supervisor.**

Career Development

- **Improving technical skills and knowledge about your field.**
- **Assistance in creating plans for future educational goals.**
- **Broadening awareness of career options in your discipline.**
- **Gaining insight into the methods and problems of management.**

The objective is to leave the internship knowing you have a good reference and can be hired at a later date. Taking the steps described above allows the intern to end the internship on good terms regardless of their future plans. Remember the world is very small and you never know "who knows who". Therefore, as rule of thumb,

- **always leave on a positive note and**
- **never burn bridges, even under negative circumstances.**

Remember, the ultimate goal in obtaining the internship, is to get a JOB. Through an internship you can fulfill that goal by getting valuable experience. Therefore, be consistent and efficient. Always take the initiative and never look at one task as being more important than another. The key to a successful reputation is getting the job done and doing it well.

PREPARING TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

Knowledge gained from the internship experience, should improve your attitude towards your studies. Therefore, you should be ready and eager to get back into the books. In order to make the

transition, it is necessary for you to prepare. That preparation involves organization and time management. As a rule, you should have learned new skills and techniques during the internship experience. Thus, simply utilizing the new knowledge you acquired during the internship should make your transition back to school smoother. Preparing a checklist of questions can be very helpful.

Checklist

1. **Did you pre-register for classes?**
2. **Should you adjust your schedule based on new knowledge?**
3. **How many courses are you taking?**
4. **What are the course descriptions?**
5. **What time are your courses given?**
6. **Will you have work-study?**
7. **What is your involvement with various organizations?**
8. **Did you save sufficient money to get resettled back at school?**

If there are questions or concerns regarding any of these issues, call the appropriate office at your school and they will be able to provide you with the information or send information that you may need.

HINTS FOR ACHIEVING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

HINT...

It would be wise to contact your professors before the beginning of the semester to inquire about the syllabus.

Once you have completed your checklist, the next step is to make a schedule for the semester. Since your body has been conditioned over the last twelve weeks during your internship to start your day at 8 a.m., it would be wise to continue on that schedule.

HINT...

Treat your time at school just as you would a job.

If you do not have class at 8 a.m. go to the library or to a place conducive for studying. Treat your place of study as your office. Therefore, when you are not busy

in class,

at work-study, or

at organizational activities/meetings;

be in your office studying.

Set a scheduled time to be in your office, preferably from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Just as with any job give yourself one hour for lunch. Stick to your schedule and do not deviate unless it is absolutely necessary, (appointment with a professor, study group or a meeting).

Include in your schedule:

- **seminars that will enhance your overall educational and professional skills, plus**
- **career conferences and graduate opportunity seminars you would like to attend.**

HINT...

***Weekends* – If you have followed your schedule during the week, your weekends can be utilized at your leisure. Use them wisely!**

- **Catch up on some reading, whether for pleasure or for school.**
- **Spend at least two to four hours reviewing school work especially in areas that are difficult for you.**
- **Eat well, get enough rest, and prepare yourself to be ready for your next week of work.**

Most students see college as an opportunity to do things their way, without having anyone to tell them what to do. That is absolutely correct, for college is a time for students to begin taking responsibility for their time. Keeping this in mind, try following the format presented above and create a similar

study model that works for you. We guarantee that in the long run if you make a conscientious effort and put your education first, you will be able to take advantage of every opportunity and resource available to you. If you treat your time in college as a full-time job, when your college career ends, you will have developed all that you need educationally and professionally to obtain the career you desire.

HINT...

Keep a copy of the Strategic Action Plan list by Howard G. Adams, Ph.D., on pg. 5 at your office and glance at it every so often. Let it be your motto and when it is all done, we can assure you, you will be very pleased at the person that stands before you in the mirror.

Staying In Touch

Now that you have completed your first successful internship, what is next? Staying in touch! Throughout this manual making the most out of the internship experience was stressed. Therefore, though the internship has ended, it does not mean you should discontinue practicing what you learned until the next internship. Staying in touch is very important.

The objective is to keep your name fresh in the employer's mind because

opportunities may come available, and

you might be in the right place at the right time.

Thus, out of courtesy;

- **send a thank you card for the opportunity that was given to you,**
- **send a card during the holidays,**
- **call every so often, and keep the employer updated with your address and phone number.**

Always remember, the employer has something you desire (job experience). If you keep that in mind, you will always find creative ways to keep your name fresh in the employer's mind.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Due to the rising wave of internships in the past decade, it is imperative that students take every work experience seriously. Employers of today see internships as the key to job preparation; therefore, whether the job experience is "good" or "bad", students must see it as a learning experience and an opportunity to get their foot in the door. An internship is the place to learn from your mistakes, to get "your foot in the water" and yet still have time to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to get a good job.

The decision to make the most out of the internship experience is up to "YOU" the student. The knowledge, skills and personal development you can gain from an internship is determined by what you put into the job experience. No one is going to give you "ANYTHING", you have to work for "EVERYTHING". Thus, there is no time to waste hoping for great opportunities to come your way. You have to take the initiative and make great things happen.

The authors' intent is for students to realize that their future lies in their own hands. The opportunities for practical experience are available, students just have to search and make them happen. Students have to believe that they can SUCCEED. They have to KNOW it, SPEAK it and APPLY it to every opportunity, both educationally and professionally. Having that ATTITUDE will help students encounter all experiences—good or bad—with a POSITIVE outlook.

Always have a positive outlook on your lives; you are in this world for a reason and you have a purpose. Seek your purpose in your everyday encounters and do "your best" to fulfill it.

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This is GEM

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4) Database Clearinghouse/Research Component;
5) The JOURNEY Project – a guidance counseling series of videotapes to motivate students toward careers in science and engineering; and
6) "Why Graduate School?" – an annual nationwide teleconference designed to provide students with information on making the decision to pursue graduate studies and on selecting, gaining admission, financing and completing a graduate program.

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This publication was printed and is being distributed with the support of a grant from Union Carbide Corporation.